

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

Statement on the Observance of Hanukkah

November 27, 2013

Michelle and I send warm wishes to all those celebrating Hanukkah.

For the first time since the late 1800s—and for the last time until some 70,000 years from now—the first day of Hanukkah falls on Thanksgiving. It's an event so rare some have even coined it "Thanksgivukkah." As we gather with loved ones around the turkey, the menorah, or both, we celebrate some fortunate timing and give thanks for miracles both great and small.

Like the Pilgrims, the Maccabees at the center of the Hanukkah story made tremendous sacrifices so they could practice their religion in peace. In the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, they reclaimed their historic homeland. But the true miracle of Hanukkah was what came after those victories almost 2,200 years ago: The Jewish Temple was cleansed and consecrated, and the oil that was sufficient for only 1 day lasted for 8. As the first Hanukkah candle is lit, we are reminded that our task is not only to secure the blessing of freedom, but to make the most of that blessing once it is secure.

In that spirit, Michelle and I look forward to joining members of the Jewish community in America, in the State of Israel, and around the world as we work together to build a future that is bright and full of hope. From my family to yours, *Chag sameach*.

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